



*Tech. Sgts. Gio Abarintos (above left) and Chris Sorter review the design of a \$24-million runway repair project at their facility on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. As engineering specialists with the 36th Civil Engineer Squadron, they provide day-to-day mission support to military and civilian personnel and 15 associate units here. **B-1B Lancers and a B-52 Stratofortress** (right) sit on the Andersen flightline before a mission. The deployed bombers provide the U.S. Pacific Command a continuous bomber presence in the Asia-Pacific region.*

Sleepy Hollow no more

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, prepares to awaken following a long slumber

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photos by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

It's been labeled the Sleepy Hollow of the Pacific — but no more. The eyes of U.S. military leaders are again focusing on Guam to provide peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. “The strategic importance of Andersen is rejuvenating,” said Col. Michael Boera, the 36th Expeditionary Air Wing commander. “No longer is Andersen the Sleepy Hollow it's been known as after World War II and Vietnam.” In 1972, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, was the site of one of the most massive buildups of airpower in history. More than 15,000 people and 154 B-52 Stratofortress bombers lined all available flightline space. The Air Force is again building up the base. Growth at Andersen may include continued bomber and fighter rotations with the potential for beddown of permanent aircraft. Plans for nearby Northwest Field include an expeditionary combat support training



Top five reasons Andersen is “perfect”

... for the Air Force

1. Strategic location
2. U.S.-owned territory
3. Don't need permission to fly from base
4. Great remote training areas
5. Excellent area to practice flying over the Pacific

... for Airmen

1. Postcard-picture Tarague beach on base
2. One of the best places in the world to dive
3. Recently built Department of Defense Dependents Schools
4. Weather forecast 75 to 85 degrees year round
5. Expanding mission offers opportunities to excel

area, while the north ramp may include facilities for fighters like the new F-22A Raptor. The south ramp will see the addition of the Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle mission. “Growth on Guam is inevitable,” Pacific Air Forces Commander Gen. Paul Hester said. “It requires a lot of planning, and I have the utmost faith that the commander and senior leadership here are hard at work trying to determine the best way ahead.” The Air Force wants Andersen to host squadrons of bombers, air refueling tankers and fighter/attack aircraft on a regular basis with the capability to ramp up if there is a contingency in the Pacific. That will come with an increase in the current population of 3,700 permanently-assigned Airmen and Department of Defense civilian employees. The increase means the need for more base housing and a robust infrastructure. The Air Force is expanding the mission here because Guam is a strategic

location that allows aircraft to be over “enemy” territory within a few hours versus many hours or days. It is also valuable because as a U.S. territory, over-flight or landing rights are not required. During times of political uncertainty, the U.S. military always has permission to go to, and operate from, Andersen. Andersen is at the tip of the “strategic triangle,” which includes bases in Alaska and Hawaii. Combined, they are responsible for securing this corner of the world, command officials said. “Because of the sheer volume of construction, we have to phase the project,” said Lt. Col. Marvin Smith, the 36th Civil Engineer Squadron commander. Planned construction projects include new hangars, a medical and dental clinic, a military working dog facility, water tanks, and a Global Hawk maintenance complex. Down the road, the wing hopes to add a new bank, dining facility, maintenance facilities, dorms and base housing.

Planners look to divide the base into distinct land use areas. One will be an industrial area near the air terminal and hangars; the other side will be an area containing a new base exchange, theater and mall, and in time, hopefully a new commissary. For civil engineers, the chance to re-build a base comes once in a lifetime. “This is a great opportunity for us — to be able to plan for the future — it's really unheard of,” said Capt. Jake Salmond, who works in base development. “It's really exciting. When we come back years from now, we can see what it ultimately will look like.” Expansion plans have civil engineers drawing up blueprints for construction projects for next year, the next five years, even the next decade. “We're planning for the future so that 50 years from now people will be glad we designed everything right the first time,” Colonel Smith said. 🦅